

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01455 060850Z

15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-10 EUR-12 /076 W

----- 043870

O R 060709Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8689

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ISSUES CONCILIATORY
STATEMENT

1. ON MARCH 5 KOREAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, WHICH HAD MET IN TAEGU FEBRUARY 24-28, ISSUED A GENERALLY CONCILIATORY STATEMENT ON CHURCH ROLE IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. BISHOPS RECONFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEIR INDIGNATION OVER THE TREATMENT OF THE EMERGENCY PRISONERS. AT THE SAME TIME THEY WELCOMED REPEAL OF THE EMERGENCY MEASURES AND THE RELEASE OF BISHOP CHI AND MOST OF HIS CO-DEFENDENTS AS WELL AS THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF A DIALOGUE WITH THE CHURCHES, AND DECLARED THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DID NOT CONSIDER ITSELF ENTITLED TO OPERATE AS POLITICAL MOVEMENT.

2. STATEMENT WHICH REFLECTS CARDINAL KIM'S HOPE OF RESTORING GREATER CHURCH UNITY AFTER NEARLY A YEAR OF BITTER ARGUMENTS OVER THE POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH MAKES FOLLOWING FOUR POINTS:

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 01455 060850Z

A. CHURCH MUST CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THOSE SUFFERING FOR PRESERVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, BUT PRAYERS SHOULD NOT BE INDICTMENTS AND DENUNCIATIONS.

B. CHURCH INSISTS ON RIGHT TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST INJUSTICE, CORRUPTION, INFRINGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, AND OTHER IRREGULARITIES AND WILL CONTINUE MAKING MORAL JUDGMENTS OF POLITICAL SCENT. HOWEVER, JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IS TO BE SOLE AUTHORITATIVE CHURCH VOICE ON SUCH SUBJECTS.

C. CHURCH WILL CONTINUE ITS MISSION OF HELPING IMPROVE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL JUSTICE AND REDUCING SUFFERING IN COOPERATION WITH ALL WELL DISPOSED PEOPLE, BUT ITS MORAL JUDGMENTS ON POLITICAL ISSUES DO NOT MEAN THAT CHURCH IS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH OUTSIDERS IN BRINGING ABOUT DESIRED CHANGES. THE CHURCH MAINTAINS ITS POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN POLITICAL MATTERS AND ITS MORAL CRITICISM MUST NOT BE CONSTRUED AS ATTEMPT TO GAIN POLITICAL INFLUENCE FOR ITSELF.

D. CATHOLICS ARE FREE TO FOLLOW THEIR POLITICAL CONSCIENCE, BUT CATHOLICS AS A GROUP ARE NOT ENTITLED TO OPERATE AS A POLITICAL GROUP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CATHOLICS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL01455
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750078-0511
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750376/aaaacqig.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ISSUES CONCILIATORY STATEMENT
TAGS: PINS, PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006